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## Christianity's World Challenge

BY CHARLES W. KEGLEY

*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. John 16:33.*

**H**AVE you ever felt, in terrible periods such as these, that Christianity is rather weak and helpless? Perhaps you have said to yourself—as many persons less friendly to Christianity have openly maintained—"It's fine to be a Christian when there's no world war and when things are going well. But now we've got to be sensible, and to see that the 'right' side wins this horrible conflict, and solve some of the world economic and political problems that challenge us. *Then* the world will be saved for Christianity to be enjoyed."

In such a mood, we need a fresh and illuminating insight into the realistic and revolutionary character of Christianity. We need to turn to the New Testament and discover anew the positive, triumphant spirit in which Christianity challenges—not dodges—but challenges the world. Observe, we say, not how the world challenges Christianity, but how Christianity challenges the world.

To catch this challenging quality of Christianity at its strongest, we need an insight into Jesus' amazing and apparently preposterous claim, "I have overcome the world." It is imperative that we understand, first, what Jesus meant by this extraordinary statement, and second, how we, who bear the name of Christ, can live in his triumphant spirit in these defeating days.

Upon reflection we discover that Jesus must have meant at least two things by this astounding utterance. On the one hand, this world of living human beings must be overcome, not merely improved or reorganized. This is because persons and nations do not recognize and live in the life of the God who creates and sustains them, but rather oppose God and his way of love, or try to work out their own salvation according to their own

necessarily limited standards and methods. On the other hand, Jesus undoubtedly was pointing to the tremendously important but usually uncomprehended fact that God is *in* history and *is already* overcoming the world. Luther once said that if he had been God, and thus had known all that was happening in the lives of men, he would have thrown the world into the fire. But, he quickly adds—"Look what God does! Instead of doing that, he loves the world. This must be a marvelous God . . . to overcome the world by love."

Just so. It is by the cosmic action of God that the world is overcome and the victory is achieved. As Visser 't Hooft said to the Christian youth of the world at Amsterdam twenty-eight days before this present conflict: "If today the world pretends to be stronger than Jesus Christ, it is simply nineteen centuries behind the times. If we really know this message we cannot possibly be afraid for the future, either for the world or for ourselves." To understand this actual triumph is, for us, to live as those who share the triumphant life of God. "Every child of God is victorious over the world. Our faith is the victory that has triumphed over the world."

This brings us directly in front of our central concern: how, precisely, does Christianity challenge our world, and how ought we, as Christians, to live in this triumphant spirit? If we can catch a clear answer to this question, we shall have told of the most dynamic and desperately needed power for our day.

## I

First and foremost, Christianity challenges the world with a permanently satisfactory interpretation of the nature and purpose of the universe and of man. In other words, it has a *message* for which it claims intellectual validity and practical vitality.

The Christian message is clear and factual. Its conviction is that there is a Reality, God, who is personal, and who has an existence of his own prior to and independent of the universe in which we live. This God is the Eternal Creator of all persons and things, and is absolute Goodness and Love. Man has not made God after his image or opinion, but God creates and preserves man. The Christian message further maintains that the character of God is supremely disclosed in the historic events of the life, death and eternal life of Jesus Christ. The actualities of history—the concrete events of the contemporary scene—are a record of the life-giving power of the love of God, and the death-bringing consequences of man's denial of that love.

Now, upon hearing these convictions it probably strikes you that the words are different from the traditional creeds of the church, and that they are convictions about which anemic teachers or theologians might quibble, but that they certainly are not convictions that make any real difference to the "man on the street." To the former we reply: We cast the Christian convictions in this modern form because in this way it should be abundantly clear that the Christian message challenges and repudiates the beliefs and attitudes of most of the persons you know and a ma-

jority of the persons and groups about whom you daily hear or read.

Let's be specific: the Christian message challenges, for example, every person or institution that is secular, that is, that lives as if God did not exist. To all those who say—by word or deed—that there is, after all, no absolute standard of right or wrong, but only your private opinion and mine, or who say that religion is one's personal affair and that "we must be tolerant" and let each person or nation believe what it chooses and act as it wishes—to all these persons Christianity says: These statements are misleading and false. There *is* a supreme standard of Goodness, and it *does* make a difference what you or a major nation on the continent of Europe or in the Far East believes.

Or again, to be still more specific, by asserting these basic convictions concerning God and his way of triumphing in the world, Christianity challenges and opposes every person or group that makes the object of highest devotion—the thing for which we must labor and sacrifice even life itself—social processes or particular political and economic systems. This is crucially important for us to see plainly, because the nineteen-forties are conspicuously a decade in which people and nations of the world—these United States included—are making a little god of the nation, the communistic or national socialistic utopia, even Democracy (spelled, as it now comes to be, with a capital "D"! ). But to every one of these tendencies the Christian message issues this challenge: You have stopped short of the object of supreme devotion, namely, God, who overcomes the world in Jesus Christ. Unless you place your final trust in the God and Father of Jesus Christ, the creating, sustaining and redeeming power in which we live and move and have our very being, you have missed the most significant interpretation of life.

I am compelled to state Christianity's first challenge to the world in this basic way because we get the impression that the sophomoric skeptic, the nazi or communist is the person who really has a clear-cut message that makes a difference, but that, as an American novelist put it, the religion of most moderns is *Confusionism*. On the contrary, the Christian gospel is utterly clear in these convictions concerning our supreme loyalty to God in Christ and the Kingdom of wisdom and love into which we are called. So Christianity challenges every person and institution or nation that expresses the God-denying spirit of modern worldliness.

## II

In the second place, Christianity challenges the world, not only with a clear-cut, sound message, but with the only *method* that yields changes which are enduring.

In times such as these, violence and physical force appear to be the only means which individuals and nations choose to trust with any sense of safety. Street fighting in which people are killed, forcible seizure of power, deliberate executions, and inevitably the mass murder of warring nations—these are the means chosen by the world at this moment. Could anything be more

pertinent than the realization that Christianity challenges this method at every point and instant round the world?

It is painfully illuminating that in our present crisis this moral issue is largely forgotten. We easily become so lost in argument over economic and political questions that we overlook the basic moral issue on which, as Christians, we should be absolutely clear. It was wrong for Japan to steal Manchukuo, to spread death over China; it was wrong for Italy brutally to ravage Ethiopia and to overthrow the legitimate and democratically established government of Spain and then forcibly to set up a dictator and the Roman Catholic

rary victory an Arch of Triumph which lasts only as long as, for instance, the French can by force keep a stronger force from stealing the Arch and the soul of the people who reared it. But God's method for the world bears as the symbol of its triumph not an arch won by force but a cross marked into the very universe by love. To use this method is not only realistic; it is the only permanently effective method, as those who oppose it must, to their sorrow, eventually discover.

### III

Finally, Christianity challenges the world with the most significant world-wide *movement* in human history, the Christian Church.

Here Christianity speaks specifically both to the desperate need of the world and to you as an individual. It challenges the world, on the one hand, by offering it the only adequate means for determining that the emerging world culture shall have a spiritual and moral undergirding. In our generation we are in the presence for the first time in human history of the framework for a world civilization. When we speak today of the outcome of the present conflict as determining what kind of philosophy of life, what methods, what organizations shall sway all the people of the earth, every person of average intelligence understands what is meant. This would have been incredible even a generation ago. But now the towering question is this: Will this emerging world civilization be pagan and secular, God-denying, and based upon force—in which case it is doomed before it is born—or will it be Christian and cooperative so that it can approach the realization of the world Christian fellowship of which Jesus spoke?

Well, the church is the only institution in the world that by its very nature transcends all nations, races and physical limitations of man. It is the visible representative of the life of Christ, the human organ (as consisting of human beings) in which we realize God's eternal purpose. Hence, as John A. Mackay has written, "When one of the political supermen of today affirms, 'This is the century of the state,' the church makes reply: 'No, this will be the century of the church, even though it be the century of a catacombed, martyred church.'" Against it the very gates of a hell of hate and murder shall not prevail.

I wish there were now some way of making convincingly plain to every person this challenge of Christianity to act together in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the challenge of the church to our world will not become effective until the church actually produces, as it is now beginning to produce, modern martyrs and creators of the emerging civilization. But even though the church faces darker horizons than at any time since the days of persecution at its birth, the head of the church, even Jesus Christ, lives and moves through this, his body. And our final faith is in the fact that we may live in him and thereby in the mighty purposes of God, who, through Christ, could say: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."



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Church as the only legally recognized religious organization; it was wrong for Germany to invade and conquer her neighboring nations; it was wrong for Russia to crush independent Finland. Anyone who knows a minimum about the spirit of Christ knows that pillage, theft, treason, slaughter, calculated lies are evil methods of the world always and everywhere, and not with exceptions here and now because "this present situation is unique."

No, the Christian insight is that life can only be lived satisfactorily in the spirit and method of mutuality, of love. As surely as the world perishes by its hate, its lies, its violence, so surely does the spirit of Christ, of sacrificial love, offer a constant and certain hope. But someone says: "Yes, Jesus sets this method forth as an ideal, but we are dealing with a real world, and we must use realistic means—the kind the world understands." It is doubtful whether anyone who says that seriously sees into the cosmic truth of Jesus' statement, "I have overcome the world." To be sure, the method of the world carries as a symbol of its tempo-

# The Light That Has Not Failed

BY CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY

*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation. Romans 1:16.*

IN his dream a man once found himself in a city where there were many splendid and notable buildings: great granite temples of finance, towering structures where great business was transacted, marble halls where a university was housed, spacious palaces of pleasure and costly and ornate homes. In the midst of these splendid buildings there stood a plain structure, humble and modest in comparison with the mighty buildings which looked down upon it. From time to time he saw men and women going into or coming out of that humble structure. A hundred years passed and he found himself again in the same city, but he could hardly recognize it, for all the great buildings upon which he had looked one hundred years before had disappeared, and other and more imposing structures had taken their places. But still in the midst of these great buildings stood the modest frame building out of which men and women were coming and into which they were going, just as he had seen them a century before.

Now a thousand years have passed, and the man returns to that same city, and again he notes a complete transformation. All buildings that he had seen before had vanished and new buildings with new architecture and new grandeur had taken their places. But still in the midst of these magnificent edifices stood the little frame building that he had seen before, and out of it he saw men and women coming with the light of joy and satisfaction upon their faces. At length he asked some of the citizens what this building might be, and what was the explanation of its remaining unchanged, and why it was still frequented after all other buildings had vanished and disappeared. Then he learned the secret of the endurance of that one building. It was the house of God, where men found the Way of Life Eternal.

Some time ago, a widely read magazine ran an article, entitled "The Light That Has Failed." It was one of those frequent criticisms and discountings of the Christian Church to which we have become so accustomed in past years. Yet, singularly enough, the very central proposition of that article, that men and nations cannot live by bread alone, but must have the Word of God, and cannot be guided by human wisdom and experience, but must have the torch of spiritual truth and revelation—that very statement in itself was a tribute to the fact that the Light has not failed. It is only because the Light has not failed, only because the lips of the church have not been sealed in silence and consternation, that men can know that what the world needs is spiritual guidance and spiritual rebirth. Let us give thanks to God for the light of Christian truth, and contemplate anew what it has done for

mankind. When we do so, the word that comes to us is that word of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

Paul had preached the gospel in Tarsus, where he was born; in Jerusalem, the world's holy city; in Damascus, the world's oldest city; in Antioch, the golden city on the Orontes; in Ephesus, where the world's greatest temple, the Temple of Diana, stood; in Athens, the city of the mind and the home of the philosophers; and when he wrote his letter to the Romans, he was preaching the gospel in Corinth, the metropolis of Greece. But not yet had he preached the gospel at Rome, the heart of the world. It had long been his desire and ambition to go to Rome and preach the gospel of Christ there. "I must see Rome" had been the determination of his mind, but every time he planned to go to Rome something came up to prevent him. Unable to go to the city in person, he writes this letter to the church and the Christians at Rome.

Because of his frequent failures to get to Rome, it is evident that there were some who were taking the view that Paul was reluctant or afraid to come to Rome and preach there. It was as if they had said: "Paul can preach the gospel at Jerusalem and Antioch and Athens and Corinth, but he will find it is a different matter to preach the gospel at Rome, the mighty capital of the world, with its grandeur, its cruelty, its wickedness, its superstition, its pomp and its power."

If this was in their minds, Paul corrects that misunderstanding by this bold affirmation, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." "You talk about the power of Rome, and well do I know that power, for I am a citizen of Rome, and proud of it. I have walked over Rome's great highways and chasm-spanning bridges, and everywhere I have seen the dust of its marching legions carrying out the commands of the emperor. I know the power of Rome, but I do not fear it, for I have a secret to tell about a power that is greater than the power of Rome, and that is the power of the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation."

Paul speaks as a Christian, as a believer in Christ, and he is writing to other Christians when he says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Only a Christian can be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Its enemies can hate it, and persecute it, and revile it, and despise it, but only a supposed friend of the gospel can be ashamed of it. That was foreseen and foretold by Jesus when he said: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Those great words of St. Paul—how he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ and why he was not ashamed of it, because it was the power of God unto salvation—are a tonic for us in this adulterous and sinful generation. We need a new and soul-refreshing conviction as to the power of the gospel of Christ, and a new and soul-refreshing pride in its beauty, its

majesty and the glory of its past and the glory of its future. It is the same gospel which Paul believed and preached, and you and I today have the same reasons that he had for not being ashamed of the gospel. Indeed, because of the great triumphs of the gospel since that age when it was preached by St. Paul, we have even greater reasons than Paul had for not being ashamed of it.

## I

*I am not ashamed of the gospel because I am not ashamed of him whom it proclaims, its divine founder, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

I am not ashamed of the fact that Christ is the eternal Son of God and that he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God emptied himself and humbled himself and was made in the likeness of sinful man for the salvation of the world. There are those who tell us that the main thing is to endeavor to do the will of Christ and that his rank will take care of itself. But that will not do for me. I must have a Christ who not only can teach me and guide me and inspire me, but a Christ who can save me, and only the Son of God can do that. If I need a Savior, then why should I be ashamed of the fact that that Savior is very God of very God, the everlasting Son of the Father?

I am not ashamed of the great miracle by which Christ came into the world, that the eternal Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born of her, yet without sin. I am not ashamed of that great constituent miracle which qualified him to become the world's redeemer.

I am not ashamed, as many in the church today seem to be, of the miracles which he wrought. In his *Emile*, Rousseau wrote: "Get rid of the miracles, and you will have the world at the feet of Jesus in a generation." So there has been a tendency to look upon the miracles as an impediment, an embarrassing addendum of the Christian message, and to apologize for them before the proud thought of a world alienated from God. But if we did get rid of the miracles, and so brought the world to the feet of Jesus, what Jesus would it be? Certainly not the Jesus of the Gospels, and the Christ of the ages, for the only Christ we know is the One who worked great miracles. The evidence that he walked on the sea is just the same as that he walked on the land, and the evidence that he raised the dead to life is just the same as the evidence that he himself died on the cross. No; we are not ashamed of his miracles, not ashamed of the fact that they certified to his divine power, and, as he himself said, showed "that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." And we are not ashamed of the mercy and compassion which they bestowed and revealed; that they opened the eyes of the blind to the beauty of sky and earth; that they opened the ears of the deaf to the music of the wind and the rain and the sound of human voices; that they comforted and healed the brokenhearted.

I am not ashamed of the precepts and teachings of Jesus. The words of other speakers and writers are

like words cut into stones and monuments, but the words of Jesus are like the wind which bloweth where it listeth. The systems and schemes and philosophies of men have blossomed and withered and disappeared like the leaves of the forests, but the words of Jesus are ever green. He never wrote a line save in the dust. Yet the words that he spake have brought more hope and more joy and more righteousness to the world than all the sayings of all the wise men of all the ages. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away." Now the passing away of 1900 years has only served to confirm the truth of what Jesus said. Find me a saying of Jesus that is obsolete, find



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me a word of Christ that needs revision, that is no longer applicable to the needs and desires, the sins and passions, the sorrows and griefs of mankind; and then, but not until then, shall I be ashamed of the teachings of Christ.

I am not ashamed of the example of Jesus. Age cannot wither and custom cannot stale his infinite variety. In the womb of the morning he has the dew of his strength. I look around me in the world today, and I see the haughty and proud and cruel and godless despots, stained with the blood of their fellow men, who dominate so large a part of it. I listen to their proud boasting and inhumane words, and then I turn to Jesus of Nazareth and hear his words of righteousness, of justice, of peace, of universal good will, and I am not ashamed of him. No! I am not ashamed of his complete deity. I am not ashamed of his beautiful and fadeless example. Write as high as you will the names of the greatest actors on the stage of human affairs, and over them the names of the wisest of the sons of men,

and over them the names of the saintliest and purest of mankind. Let these names shine with all the glory and beauty which are due them, and over them all, across the sky of the world which he created, and to redeem which he died on Calvary, I will write, with a pen dipped in his blood, the Name which is above every name, the blessed Name of Christ.

## II

*I am not ashamed of the GOSPEL of Christ.*

Paul did not say "I am not ashamed of Christ," but, "I am not ashamed of the *gospel* of Christ," and that means a great deal more. There are many who will praise Christ as a teacher, as a beautiful character, perhaps even as divine, but who reject him utterly and are ashamed of his gospel. And what is that gospel? It is the message of forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ crucified upon the cross. This was the message that Paul declared he was ready to preach at Rome, the great heart of the world. It was not the world's wisdom that he would proclaim there, but Christ Crucified.

I am not ashamed of the remedy of the gospel for the sins of the world. Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel because therein was revealed the righteousness of God—that is, the way in which God saves a sinner and bestows righteousness upon man. Rome had all kinds of power, and all kinds of wisdom; but although the world shook beneath the march of its legions, it had no power unto salvation. I might be ashamed of a religion that overlooked my transgression and my sin. I might be ashamed of some cheap forgiveness which compromised the righteousness and holiness of God. But never can I be ashamed of that sublime Act and Fact whereby God in Christ reconciles me unto himself, and leaves me pardoned and justified, presents me faultless before the presence of his glory, so that even the greatest archangel in heaven dare not stand before me and say, "I accuse thee." I am not ashamed of the gospel that can take a poor, dying thief and make him fit for the company of Paradise.

I am not ashamed of the results of the gospel. Some years ago I sailed into the harbor of Syracuse, and down on the waterfront I saw the statue of the famous Greek engineer, Archimedes, who at the siege of Syracuse by the refraction of his mirrors set fire to the Roman fleet, the man who said that if he could find a place on which to stand and rest his lever, he could move the world. Two centuries later, a ship came sailing into the Bay of Syracuse from Malta, and on that ship was a prisoner in chains on his way to Rome; and yet this man had the place to stand and had found the fulcrum with which to move the world. The charge brought against him by the rioters at Thessalonica was in the highest sense true—"They that have turned the world upside down have come hither also." The gospel did turn the world upside down.

The oldest and most beautiful and most suggestive name for the Christian Church is that which appears so often in the Acts of the Apostles, "The Way," "This Way," "The Men of the Way." It was, no doubt, a name, like so many other great names, given in

scorn and derision; but it was a tribute to the early church, for it showed that the Christian disciples had made it plain that the Christian way of life was a new and different way. Wherever you follow that highway of the King, the history of the church through the ages, you behold the blessings which it has brought to mankind.

"The worst of religions," said Lowell, "is no religion at all; and these men living in ease and luxury, indulging themselves in the amusement of going without religion, may be thankful that they live in lands where the gospel they neglect has tamed the beastliness and ferocity of men, who, but for Christianity, might long ago have eaten their carcasses like the South Sea Islanders, or cut off their heads and tanned their hides like the monsters of the French Revolution. When the microscopic search of skepticism which has hunted the heavens and sounded the seas to disprove the existence of a Creator has turned its attention to human society and found a place on this planet ten miles square where a decent man can live in decency, comfort and security, supporting and educating his children, unspoiled and unpolluted, a place where age is revered, infancy respected, womanhood honored, and human life held in due regard, when skeptics can find such a place, ten miles square on this globe, where the gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundation and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for the skeptical literati to move thither and there ventilate their views."

Do not be misled or deceived by the Satanic outbursts of animalism and tyranny and human ferocity which curse and shadow our world today. In spite of all that, as compared with "that hard pagan world" into which the gospel first came, the world today is a world that has been "turned upside down." Is the world's labor done today by slaves? Is one-half the population of the world slave? Are prisoners when taken in battle put to the sword? Are little children exposed and left to die by their parents on the hillsides, and in the forests? Is woman a plaything and chattel of mankind? To ask these questions is to answer them. The power that wrought this great change was the gospel of Christ. Call up one by one the systems of darkness and tyranny and superstition which have darkened and cursed the earth, but which have long since disappeared. Call them up out of their graves and ask them, "Who smote you? What made you pass?" And one by one they answer, "Christ smote us and we died."

I am not ashamed of the results of the gospel as manifested in its followers, the disciples of Jesus. This letter which Paul is writing to the Romans comes to a beautiful and touching conclusion with his personal greetings and salutations to the then humble, but now forever famous and immortal, disciples of Jesus in that great heart of the world: Mary, Andronicus, Junia, Amplias, Apelles, Herodian, the household of Narcissus, Rufus, Hermes. Paul was not ashamed of those disciples, and Christ was not ashamed of them. We are not ashamed of the apostles. We are not ashamed of disciples like these in Rome. We are not ashamed

of the martyrs. We are not ashamed of disciples of Jesus in our midst today. We can open the old family Bible and in the pages between the Old and the New Testaments read the names of our own loved ones, names that are worthy to stand side by side with those Paul mentions at the end of his letter to the Romans, and names which are written forever in the Lamb's Book of Life. No, we are not ashamed of them! Christ is not ashamed of them, and "they shall walk with him in white." In darkness they are our light, in weakness our strength, and in trouble our refuge.

Instead of being the light that has failed, it is the church alone, with its message of Christ and the Word of God, which holds aloft the torch of guidance and hope for mankind amid the darkness and confusion of the world today as it rocks and rolls in its enmity against God.

### III

*I am not ashamed of the gospel's hope for the future.*

If it were a lost cause, instead of the only cause which shall conquer, we might be ashamed of it. But when we see the kingdoms and empires which have waxed and waned and disappeared, while the church goes on from age to age, we know that the gospel has in it the invincible power of God. Christ alone belongs to the ages. We are not ashamed of the fact of the hope the gospel gives us that a new heaven and a new earth will succeed this present clouded scene of turmoil and strife, and anguish, and sin, and suffering, and woe. We watch the parade of all the kingdoms, and all the rulers, and all the statesmen, and we realize anew that it is he alone who stands in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks, that liveth and was dead, and behold, is alive for evermore, who has the keys of authority, and who will one day right all wrongs and solve all problems, and out of the present chaos, and war, and strife, and injustice, bring in everlasting peace. When we think of him, we behold heaven opened and the White Horse and his Rider going forth to conquer, and we are not ashamed of the fact that by the power of the gospel the blessed Age one day shall come, and heaven and earth shall ring with the shout, "Alleluiah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!"

I am not ashamed of the gospel's hope for me and for you, as individuals. When we measure men by time, by the incidents and events of this world, what is he but an insect that spreads his wings for a brief moment, and then is gone forever? But when we measure man by the gospel, by the fact that in Christ he is called to honor, and glory, and immortality, then what a piece of work is man!

We cannot make light of death or its universal reign, or how it seems to scoff at man's highest hope and lay in the dust his greatest achievements.

Aye, but to die and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot,  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod. . . .

The weariest and most loathed worldly life,  
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature, is a Paradise  
To what we fear of death.

I know the guesses, the surmises, the "perhapses," of the philosophers; what the Platos and the Ciceros and the Socrateses have said on the subject, and I know how cold they leave the heart. When I hear what they have to say, then I am not ashamed of Christ who said, not "I think there is another life," or "I hope there is," or "There ought to be," or "There may be," but, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life."

To Him I owe my life and breath,  
And all the joys I have;  
He makes me triumph over death  
And saves me from the grave.

The gospel has lost nothing of its power. It is as universal as man, as wide as the heart of the Eternal, and yet it has one condition upon which it bestows its power. "It is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe." This mightiest power on earth is nothing to you until you believe. "To as many as believed, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

How about your life as a Christian? Do you feel the power of the gospel of Christ? Is there little in your life to suggest that it has power? Then let this be your prayer, "Lord, increase my faith."

And now to you who have never confessed the Name of Christ and have never been ashamed of the gospel, because you have never believed it. Even the greatest angel in heaven could not compel your faith, but all the angels in heaven rejoice over you when you believe and repent. All that the gospel did for Paul or anyone else it can do for you, if you fulfill its one condition, and that is, that you believe. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And what it means to be saved, what it means for a man made in the image of God to be restored to the divine life, what it means to unfold and expand all the powers of your soul, it will take the measureless love of God, the priceless blood of Christ, and all the music of all the angels of heaven, through all the ages of eternity, to describe and tell.

At the two hundredth anniversary of the Scotch Presbyterian Church of Charleston, S. C., one of the speakers related this legend concerning Zacchaeus. The wife of Zacchaeus, after his repentance and conversion, when he came down from his sycamore tree that memorable day as Jesus passed through Jericho, noted that early every morning Zacchaeus arose from her side on the bed and left their house. At length she became curious to know what it meant, and one morning followed him to see what he did. She followed him as he went down their narrow street with a bucket in his hand until he came to the village well. There he lowered the bucket, filled it with water, and then went out of the gate of the city until he came to a sycamore tree. There he set down the bucket and began to gather and cast away all small stones and branches and rubbish of any kind that lay about the foot of the tree.

Having done this, he poured the bucket of water upon the roots of the tree; and then gently caressing the trunk of the tree with his hand, stood silent as if in affectionate contemplation. His amazed wife then came out from her hiding place and asked Zacchaeus what he was doing, and why he bestowed all that attention on the sycamore tree. This was his answer—"This is the tree where I found Christ."

That is the history that makes any church illustrious. Not the place it has filled in the social or educational life of the community, but the fact that within and through this church men have found Christ. A church which has a history of only one year, or one day, but where even one soul has found Christ, is more notable than a church which has stood for ages without bringing a soul to Christ. In that day when God "writeth up the people," may he be able to say of not a few, "That man was born there."

Let the churches echo the message that Jesus saves even unto the uttermost. Let the hymns sing it! Let the preacher proclaim it! Let the people rejoice in it, until at length the church militant shall become the church triumphant, and sinners, whose love can ne'er forget the wormwood and the gall, shall join the everlasting song, and crown him Lord of all!

### My Church and I

I AM a part of the church; one among many, but I am one.

I need the church for the development of the buried life within me; the church in turn needs me.

The church may be human in its organization, but it is divine in its purpose. That purpose is to point me toward God.

Participating in the privilege of the church, I shall also share in its responsibilities, taking it upon myself to carry my fair share of the load, not grudgingly but joyfully.

To the extent that I fail in my responsibility, the church fails; to the extent that I succeed, the church succeeds.

I shall not wait to be drafted for service to my church; I shall volunteer, saying, "Here am I, send me!"

I shall be loyal in my attendance, generous in my gifts, kind in my criticisms, creative in my suggestions, loving in my attitudes.

I shall give to my church my interest, my enthusiasm, my devotion—most of all, myself.

HAROLD W. RUOPP.

IN THE CROSS God gathers up all history into a moment of time. It is the act which reveals to us the eternal activity of suffering and redeeming love all down the ages.

G. A. STUDDERT-KENNEDY.

HOWEVER good a clock may be, we must still wind it. And he who takes good care of his heart will, as it were, wind it up toward God night and day.

FRANCIS DE SALES.

## Was Christ Wrong?

By ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS

HE sat there in my study, as earnest a young man as you will ever find. He said what many people feel and do not feel like saying: "It will not work." Sad words—troubled words—honest words: Christianity will not work.

He wanted it to work. I brought Robert Browning into our discussion, reading a few lines from "Bishop Blougram's Apology":

What think you of Christ, friend? When all's done and said

Like you this Christianity or not?

It may be false, but will you wish it true?

Has it your vote to be so if it can?

His troubled eyes warmed up. "I wish it," he said, "more than I can tell you. I hope you don't lose your belief that it is true." His eyes clouded again. "But I just feel now that *Christ was wrong*."

### 'I, TOO, THOUGHT HE WAS WRONG'

The sun was going down over the Jersey hills. It was that soft moment of the day before you know that in a moment you will have to put the lights on, yet you cannot bring yourself to do it. There entered gently a group of men. We were so intent I had not heard them knock. Maybe they didn't. At least, suddenly I noticed that they were there.

I do not think I can describe the first one. I had always thought that Peter would make me ache with his bustling energy, but the quality he gave was the calmness of strong depths.

"I, too, thought he was wrong," young Peter said. "We told him not to go up into Jerusalem. He had no chance. They meant to get him—and they did. I said, 'Don't go!' But his face was set steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem.

"I said, 'Then let us guard you,'

" 'You have a sword?' he asked.

"We showed him two.

"He laughed gently as he often did. 'It is enough,' he said. I hardly know yet what he meant.

"I pulled my sword when they tried to take him in the garden—he would not let me use it.

"I was confused. I thought him wrong. I'm not trying to excuse myself. I did deny I knew him. But when I followed to the court, I did not understand. I thought—that Christ was wrong! It made me uncertain and I was so sure before. It is hard, when certainty has disappeared, for a man to stand alone."

"I always wanted to believe," a second man spoke up.

"Excuse me," he said gravely, "I did not introduce myself. My name is Thomas, sometimes called Didymus.

"Please do not say Doubting Thomas, though maybe I do deserve it.

"It was only that he went so fast and was so sure. My mind was always asking for proof. 'The proof,'

I'd say, 'What is the proof?' 'A gentleman from Missouri,' I overheard myself called one day by a clever preacher. At least I was not as stubborn as their mules.

"I found I could not always be sure that he was right in the things he did day by day. He did not seem to mind being wrong at the moment—as I did.

"I never had any question that he would be found right in the end and I knew at last that I would rather die with him on his journey to Jerusalem than be alive in that dead world I knew before he came."

#### THE TESTIMONY OF JUDAS

The third who spoke had one of the saddest faces I have ever seen, deep lined with sorrow, with the agony of remorse, with the heaviness of men's condem-



ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS

nation—for it is hard to live in a community of people who shrink from you. Long years do make lines upon the face which nothing can erase. His voice was calm, but I could not tell if it was from peace or courage.

"I thought him wrong." [This man used the same words too, you see.] "He told me then, 'Do what you must and do it quickly.' I've always wondered why he did not hold me back there in that upper room. But it never was his way—to hold men back.

"He told us once about a man who had two sons who gave one son the money he wanted to go into the Big City.

"The fool! I thought. 'The stupid father! Why did he not prevent his son from going?'

"God is like that,' he said to us that day. Strange that it is so—but it is. I know. God let me go.

"I was so sure that Christ was wrong and though he knew that he was right, he never made me do what

he believed, because he said that God wants us only when we come of ourselves.

"There are many like me on the earth," Judas said quietly, "Even though mothers dare no longer use my name to name their boys."

"My trouble is that I believe that Christ was wrong."

The dusk was greater. I could hardly tell who was speaking. I reached over and flicked on the lights. There was only one earnest young man sitting there saying again the words so many people think and dare not say, that "Christ was wrong!"

#### WHERE IS GOD?

We have arrived at the climax question of man's uncertainty. Big questions seem to have a way of expressing themselves in little words. We have been taking them up—one question at a time—three words at a time—under the general theme "The Disappearance of Certainty."

Where is God? That question men are constantly asking, we faced two weeks ago.

What am I? It is not easy to believe the eighth Psalm, which we did not use last Sunday, but which, in a way, sums up man's wonder that he has a position of responsibility on the earth:

"When I consider the heavens," we say, "what is man that thou art mindful of him?"—as if we meant the world was too big for God to care what happens to us and anyway it could not make any difference what we did.

It is natural for us to read it with that accent because that is the way we feel in "the immensities of earth and sky, its sorrowful distances . . ." as another poet wrote.

Read the eighth Psalm through, however, as it is written: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? For thou hast made him but a little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

That is not a statement about man's smallness. It is a wondering—bewildered maybe—but a wondering about the strange but evident fact that somehow man is important in God's universe.

Well, you could go along with both Sundays' emphases:

God is and he is good! Yes, we agree.

Man is not a pawn in the hands of powerful and pitiless forces. In him is the possibility of heaven or hell on earth and his choices are important. It does make a difference what a man does with his life. We hesitate, then nod assent.

#### IF CHRIST WAS WRONG, LET'S BE HONEST

To both these things you might agree without agreeing with the answer you all know I shall give to the topic question: Was Christ Wrong?

If Christ was wrong, we must be honest about it. I have never been able to understand how one of our

most brilliant philosophical minds today could end a book, which had as its thesis that man was unable by his nature to make a decent social life on earth, with this final paragraph:

In the task of that redemption the most effective agents will be men who have substituted some new illusions for the abandoned ones. The most important of these illusions is that the collective life of mankind can achieve perfect justice. It is a very valuable illusion for the moment; for justice cannot be approximated if the hope of its perfect realization does not generate a sublime madness in the soul. Nothing but such madness will do battle with malignant power and "spiritual wickedness in high places." The illusion is dangerous because it encourages terrible fanaticisms. It must therefore be brought under the control of reason. One can only hope that reason will not destroy it before its work is done.

Inevitably will come moral catastrophe from life founded upon a belief a man knows to be a falsehood. And from the very fact that the illusion was a high one comes the greater tragedy.

Note that I did not say that this philosopher is saying something he believes to be a falsehood. He is a courageous and daringly honest thinker. I am saying that if we believe what he says about illusions to be true, then, if it is an illusion, we are doomed to catastrophe. We must not keep on pretending that what he calls an illusion is not an illusion. It would be a falsehood for me if I were in his position and continued to advise people to act with passionate concern to change a world which I believed could not be changed that way. One would be saying in effect: I know you cannot do it. But you just forget what I believe and live as if you could make on earth this beloved community.

I do not believe that God deals with the human mind and spirit that way—as if we were donkeys who could be made to walk faster by having a tuft of hay fastened just out of reach before our noses. What I am saying is that life based on an illusion is doomed to catastrophe and a man is giving false advice who urges any action based on what he believes to be false.

#### IF CHRIST WAS WRONG, EARTH IS DOOMED

If Christ was wrong; if this way of life was a rainbow of idle promise; if never shall men be able to live on earth as the children of God; if always we must go on as we are until, if God pleases to do it, he chooses to make the world all different—then I for one would quit the church. Christianity to me is no philosophy of: We cannot do it but we must live *as if* we could. Unless we face the question whether we believe in Christ's way or no, we shall become like the man Robinson wrote about who "climbed a rainbow and hurt himself severely." We must first of all be honest in our faith, honest enough to say and act upon our saying, as the young man did who told me in my study that he thought that Christ was wrong.

But if Christ *was* wrong, the world is doomed. We must be honest, too, with the way we take if we say Christ was wrong. We are nearly blind; we see but

dimly into the future if we cannot see the dead-end sign just beyond us on the road we then must travel if we believe that Christ was wrong.

I do not want you to think that life is divided into a simple black-white world. We live, most of us most of our lives, in the grays—touched with rose sometimes—sometimes smudged with soot—never quite clear-white or dark-black—always a bit gray. But we are talking this morning of ends toward which we travel, and when we talk of ends we can see black-white there.

If Christ was wrong and the jungle laws are right, we get no beloved community in the end. If Christ was wrong, we quit him; but if he *was* wrong, what have we to go to? We must also be honest with our choices.

Peter expressed it in the text which is basic for this meditation. Christ's way became increasingly difficult for men to take. "From that time [the account says] many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away? Then Peter answered him, Lord, to whom then shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

One must not take the words to mean that there was no alternative but to stick. It must be positively understood. There is a choice we have to make between two ways of life. With one you take no chance. The jungle law is a dead-end way. With the other there are no provable certainties, but out beyond the things of the moment there is that which makes the world have sense. This, said Peter, is the way of eternal life. And for us there is no one to whom we have any right to go. Thou hast the words of eternal life.

#### IF CHRIST WAS NOT WRONG

It is at this point of faith that the world will—and should—divide itself today. If you believe, as of course you know I do, that Christ was not wrong, then you have no honest alternative. You have to live that way. The Christian has his own "declaration of independence" to proclaim. He is not of them of little or no faith. He has a faith to which he must give "his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor."

There are risks in such a declaration. I believe that no one of us as yet understands how great those pressures may be on the individual or how many hardships the church must pass through until it saves that which is in danger of being lost in this world.

But if you stick by Christ and his church, a church which for a while may have to be smaller—at least it will have to be made up more and more only of those who are as certain as Peter—then you will help people in their uncertainties.

It will not simplify life for you. Personally you may—will, I do believe—have to suffer for this faith before you are through. There *are* times when comfort and convenience do not conflict, when you can love father and mother, wife and child, without deserting God. This I believe is what was meant to be. But when it is not the kind of world it was meant to be, the fate of mankind depends in some measure upon your knowing what comes first.

We will be torn in mind and emotion many a time

and will in that inner conflict be useless for a moment in the world. That conflict is practically speaking inevitable for us all. But in this scared world in which the old certainties are going—as some of them are gone—when naive ideas of progress, and placid laissez-faire optimism, and belief in the benevolent triumph of impersonal and irresponsible goodness have all departed—there remains for you and me a judgment and a choice.

The Judgment—Do you believe that Christ was right? I do not ask you to be dishonest. He would not want that. Do you believe that his way of love is the only way by which we may have a decent world?

Then make your choice. Let the uncertainties disappear. The time of the end you know not. We shall probably not live to see it. But the end is certain. Others are going. They walk no more with Christ on his way. Sadly they depart. They wish him to win if he can, but they do not believe he will.

"Then said Jesus, will you also go away?" Then shall man in this day make answer: "To whom then shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life."

## A Land of Hills and Valleys

By GENE EBERT BARTLETT

*The land into which thou goest to possess it is a land of hills and valleys . . . a land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord are upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. Deuteronomy 11:11.*

TO lovers of adventure the history of the American continent has no parallel in modern times. It has been a continuous story of exploration and discovery. From the time Columbus set foot upon the island of San Salvador down through the quests of Ponce de Leon and the discovery of the Pacific by Balboa, the American story has been one of advancing frontiers.

One of the most important of these explorations, for example, was the trip of Lewis and Clark into the northwest in 1803-4. Jefferson was President of the young republic and American culture was confined almost entirely to the Atlantic seaboard. Then Lewis and Clark set out into almost unknown country and came back with reports of great rivers, fertile plains and majestic mountains. From that time on the people of America had a conception of what ultimately must be claimed by the expanding frontiers, of the nation.

As we come to this Lenten season, when the entire world is in upheaval and revolution, many of us long for some kind of Lewis and Clark expedition into the future which might tell us what the land of tomorrow holds. For Lent is a time when we recover and rethink our faith. Faith is put to its severest test when it faces the uncertainties of the future. Thus Lent has a peculiar ministry for us this year; it must undergird us for the future.

There is always a conflict in our minds about the future. We want to know what it holds; yet, we do not want to know, lest seeing tragic times in the offing we should have to live in dread of their coming. In times like ours, however, when everything seems hanging in the balance we should indeed be grateful for some Lewis and Clark who could explore the land to which we must go in the months ahead.

Very well. There is a verse in the Old Testament record which can render such a service for us. It arises out of a situation analogous to ours. The book of Deuteronomy, you remember, contains some codes and messages which Moses brought to the people of Israel during their long sojourn in the wilderness. In the eleventh chapter there is reference to the new land into which the people are going under the leadership of God. They have come out of Egypt, a strange land, half desert, dependent for its entire life upon the gifts of a single river. In contrast, Moses gives the people of Israel a picture which by analogy may be also for us a vision of the future. Said Moses: "The land into which thou goest to possess it is a land of hills and valleys. . . . A land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord are upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

Now there are many specific aspects of the future which no man can foresee. Yet there are some universal truths which we do know. They are the realities we seek to claim anew in Lent. In picturesque language this verse sums them up. "A land of hills and valleys"—yes, surely that is true. Every year of every life is that. But that is not all. "A land which the Lord thy God careth for"—ah, if we could keep our faith in that! If we could know indeed that "the eyes of the Lord are upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year"!

Let us then stay our minds during these days by looking steadfastly at those known truths about the unknown. Lent should help us recall them. Obviously no generation is an entity unto itself. It is a link in a great chain, affected by the times which preceded, affecting those which follow. Prediction, therefore, is more than mere guessing. What can we know about the future?

### I

First of all, as our verse puts it, it is a land which we ourselves shall have to possess. "The land whither thou goest to possess it." The promised land for the children of Israel had many blessings waiting to be claimed, but it cost them something to possess them. They were to learn that only as they paid the price were these things to become their own. Talk about the "high cost of living"! Canaan taught them that!

Whatever the months and years ahead may hold, we may be sure that most things we shall possess only when we have paid the price. Many persons living in marriage cannot be said to possess the joys of partnership because they are not paying the price in terms of courtesy and respect. Many a student is in our university who will pass through it as an alien might pass unchanged through a foreign land. Though he

may dwell on the campus the specified time he never will possess its real truths, for he has not been willing to pay what they cost in diligence and application. Some of us dwell near the land of health but shall never possess it because we are not willing to pay for it in surrender of habits and acceptance of discipline. There is an oversimplification, yet a great truth, in Mr. Kipling's observation that if anyone has not claimed from life what he wished from it that is clear proof either that he did not really want it, or that he tried to bargain about the cost.

Think, for example, of a man like Alexander Whyte of St. George's in Edinburgh, the eminent Scotch preacher who arose out of direst poverty to become one of the greatest preachers of the past century. So eager was he for an education that he lived in Aberdeen, we are told, sharing an attic room with another student. But the bed was large enough for only one so they divided the day and night into six-hour shifts, one studying while the other slept. Sometimes he paid only eighty-five cents a week for board—which must have been meager fare, to say the least; yet, on occasion, he spent as much as fifteen dollars for a book—money which must have cost unbelievable skimping. In his later ministry, however, when Whyte stepped into his pulpit there could be no doubt that he had gone into the land of understanding and possessed it—at terrific cost, to be sure, but possessed it!

You see, the very first lesson of the Bible record is that the tree of life no longer is in a garden of Eden, readymade and freely given to use. The opening pages of the Old Testament tell how that experiment in living failed, for the character and soul of man decayed under it. So God sorrowing closed his Eden and opened instead Canaan, a promised land to be reached only through a wilderness and to be possessed only through sacrifice. But Canaan thus won became what Eden never could have been: the homeland of towering, tempered spirits who did not flee to cover at the sound of God's voice but who rose up obedient to walk with him, grateful for his eternal comradeship. And you will note that the tree of life never has been returned to Eden!

This may help us understand why discipline and sacrifice are keynotes of Lenten thought and practice. We shall never possess the realities of religion without them. The great realities of the Christian faith and way will be in the future. We can stake our hopes on that! But as A. J. Gossip has put it with characteristic vividness, "You will not stroll into Christlikeness with your hands in your pockets shoving the door open with a careless shoulder!"

"The land into which thou goest to possess it!" This is simply to say that the final result is not only in what lies ahead and outside us, but in what lies here and within us; not only in what awaits us but also in what we take to the future. Aldous Huxley has said it well: "Experience is not what happens to a man. It is what a man does with what happens to him." We shall really possess in the future only what we are willing to purchase by discipline and labor and sacrifice in the present.

## II

Then, this verse says that the land will be a "land of hills and valleys." Of course it will be, even as every generation has found it to be. True, at present we seem to see only valleys. But the promise is of hills, too—high places of courage, understanding and fellowship, enhanced by the very valleys beside them.

One thinks, for example, of the Negro people who have known the valleys as few races have. Taken by force only a few generations ago from their native environment and set down in a civilization which they did not choose, they have walked in deep and narrow valleys. Yet what hills of religious devotion they have



GENE EBERT BARTLETT

attained! In all American literature there is little to compare with the faith and fervor of the Negro spirituals. They are hills set down in the valleys of a race.

This truth is seen in individual lives, too. Back in 1767 the aging pastor at Waldbach, a quiet village in the Vosges, was in Strasbourg to consult his physician. His fears were confirmed. He must find a successor. But where? Who would go to so unpromising a parish? The physician had a suggestion. There was an eccentric student named John Frederic Oberlin who had declared he would accept only a church which no other competent man would take. So it was that the aging pastor climbed to the tiny apartment and told the young man of his need. Oberlin listened with keen interest. There was only one condition he made. All other students whose names had preference over his on the university list must first say that they would not take the job. That condition was easily fulfilled. The next April Oberlin set out for his new parish.

Thus began a ministry which lasted for fifty-nine

years. Tumultuous years, too, which saw the rise and fall of the French Revolution. Actually he never left his "Valley of Stone," as it was called. Symbolically, he never dwelt there. Within the normal ups and downs of a parish pastor he did amazing work. He pioneered in agricultural training for the peasants; he founded the first kindergarten on record; he was elected to the Legion of Honor for his work as an educator; he worked out organizations for community health. In retrospect, the life of Oberlin seems dramatic and unusual, as contrasted with our daily lives. Actually, his life, too, was one "of hills and valleys," as it must be for all men.

Now this strange ambiguity of life, with both hills and valleys, has puzzled sensitive souls from the dawn of human thought. Shall we then merely reconcile ourselves to a stoic resignation, assuming that in this kind of world the most we can do is be manful about it? In a land of hills and valleys, how else can we live?

### III

The remaining words of the verse are the answer to that. They climax the entire figure. "A land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord are upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." Now we have come to the point. A land to be possessed by sacrifice? Yes. A land of hills and valleys? Inescapably. But beyond, beneath and above these truths is a greater one: God cares for that land from the beginning of the year unto the end.

The psalmist had a vivid word for this truth—"encompass." "Thou encompassest my path." Every point on the compass of human experience is known and controlled by God! There's a faith for the future!

At our cottage last summer we could see the sun run its course across the great stage of Lake Ontario. One evening it came to me that the span of man's life is symbolized by the course of the sun. Birth is the dawn, full of promise and expectation. Childhood is early morning, fresh and innocent. Then there is the mid-morning of adolescence, half way between dawn and noon and having something of the qualities of both. Like a splendid noon comes man's maturity with all the intellectual and spiritual powers at their zenith. Even the clouds which come and linger through the day cannot obscure the dignity of man's noonday maturity. As the afternoon comes on the shadows lengthen, at first imperceptibly, only "adding more luster to the day." Then late afternoon. The shadows more pronounced. At last the day is done and man lays down his tools. Then like the close of day comes man's sunset, sometimes the most memorable time of all, as though all the day's clouds and lights returned for this finale. But the colors change, giving way to purple, then to gray. At last the sun drops over the edge and is gone. "It is gone," we say. But is it? Only from where we stand! At the very moment when we say, "It is gone," someone else is saying, "Here it comes!" At the precise time when we say, "Alas, it is dark!" somewhere else they are saying, "At last, it is dawn!"

Now think what the psalmist says: "Thou encompassest my path." At every point! Yes, even in death.

It is this inclusiveness which is the genius of the Christian faith. That's what our text says: "The eyes of the Lord are upon it from the beginning of the year, even until the end of the year."

We have a son at our house, aged ten months. He has taught us many things. Especially shall we always remember those first weeks, which included even night feeding! There was a time when we thought the greatest witness to the fatherhood of God is in the 121st Psalm: "He that keepeth thee . . . shall neither slumber nor sleep." But we learned something else. We know now that one of the most penetrating insights about God in the Bible is in the simple affirmation: "He hath first loved us." Why, we cared for our son for weeks before he was aware to the slightest degree of his sonship! But what made that first smile such a great event? It was the evidence that he was beginning to return the love of those who first had loved him. Thus, you see, we learned to some degree how Jesus could say that there is joy in God's heart over one sinner who repented—who became aware of his sonship.

It seems to me that it was this which made Jesus' faith so joyous and triumphant. Men had always known of God's sovereignty. When you added to that sovereignty the quality of seeking love—well, that made a faith which included and triumphed over every conceivable experience of man.

This faith does not come easily. You reach it over a road which has many forks. First, you must decide whether you believe there is a Person behind and within our world, or whether it is a machine running itself. If you choose to believe in God you will walk the highway of faith until another fork of the road confronts you. What, you must ask, is this God like in character? Is he benevolent or malevolent in his intent toward us? If you dare to believe the former you move farther along the way of faith. But you come to another fork. Here you must affirm that God cares for us either as a group only, or, more daringly, as individuals. Jesus walked the latter road. If we go with him then we come to the fork which our text has just passed. Does God's sovereign care reach into all experiences, or only those which by our standards seem favorable? Well, you know how our verse answers that in both hills and valleys from the very beginning of the year even unto the end of the year we are in the land of God's sovereign care! What could be more inclusive than that?

In short, we shall have to learn, we anxious children of this generation, what the Hebrews had to learn in their race's history. At first they thought that their God was confined to one soil and one country. Then they were forced out into other parts of the world and when they searched they found that God was there, too! At that point they found new freedom. Their knowledge and experience moved into new maturity. They no longer feared unknown lands. God would be there.

There are for us, then, some known things about the unknown. Lent is the time to reclaim them. The first great and indestructible fact is that God will be there. What more indeed can we ask than that?

# How to Bring God into the Daily Round

BY ALBERT G. BUTZER

*The Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. Psalm 42:8.*

IN the course of common conversation, we often hear a man say: "Oh, I had a corking day of golf yesterday." Or we listen to another person exclaim: "Last Saturday I had a thrilling time at the old college. I saw the home team win the big game of the season." Still another person may enthusiastically declare: "Last summer I spent several lovely days back in the old home town with old friends and the members of my family."

It is always a delight to hear people recall days of one kind or another which have meant a great deal to them and which afford them so much satisfaction in retrospect. But when have you heard a man or woman say to you: "Oh, I must tell you that yesterday I spent a blessed day with God"? In all likelihood, if any of our intimate friends were to break forth in such an utterance, we would at once suspect that they were well on the way to becoming mentally ill. I suppose there is something to be said in favor of our reticence to bare our souls to one another. So perhaps it would be fairer to ask this question: "When have you found yourself exclaiming to yourself at eventide—Well, this has been a blessed day with God?"

## DAYS 'SPENT WITH GOD'

Few of us ever say that to ourselves, do we? And very few of us are able to say that to ourselves. Yet I am sure that most of us would like to be able to say as night comes on: "This has been a day well spent with God." For we love God, we frankly recognize our deep need of him, and we yearn to bring the living God with all of his peace and power into each day, from the beginning of it to the end of it. With all our hearts we crave to say with the writer of the 42nd Psalm: "The Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."

Certainly it is not presuming too much to say that such is the deep desire of all of us. Nor is it presuming too much to say that the core of our difficulty lies here—we simply do not know how to bring God into the daily round and impart to ourselves daily companionship with God.

It hardly needs to be said at the outset of our thinking upon this matter, that if like the psalmist we are to experience the lovingkindness of the Lord in the daytime, and to know what it means to have his song with us in the nighttime, then like the psalmist we must learn to lift up our prayer unto the God of our lives. The golden gateway to a day with God is the olden gateway of private prayer and personal communion. But too often we ministers talk about daily prayer—

and about other important matters of religion—in a general and abstract manner. So the hungry sheep in our churches look up and are not fed, and from multitudes the cry goes up uttered or unexpressed: Preacher, tell us how!

Let us therefore endeavor to be very concrete and very practical in laying out before us step by step a procedure, a technique, whereby all of us may the more effectively use private prayer to bring God into the daily round and impart to ourselves day after day with God.

## 'WAYS OF PRAYING'

Several years ago there came to me a pamphlet called *Ways of Praying*, by Muriel Lester. Miss Lester is the founder of Kingsley Hall in the slums of London. Prayer to her is not an easy escape from the stark realities of life, but the most effective means of grappling with those realities. Her little treatise on prayer has afforded me much help in my own prayer life, and I commend it to you as one of the most stimulating things which you can read.

In one of the opening chapters of her booklet, Miss Lester writes this: "Immediately you awake, set your first thought on God, and keep your mind on him for a few seconds. Don't think of him subjectively," she goes on to say, "as to your relation to him, your failures, your sins or your needs. Think of him objectively. Think of him as shining beauty, radiant joy, creative power, all-pervading love, perfect understanding, purity and serenity. This need take only a moment or two, once the habit has been formed, but it is of inestimable importance. It sets the tone for the whole day."

## BEGINNING THE DAY WITH GOD

Certainly we can all see the strategy and the sound wisdom of beginning the day in such a way—beginning it by definitely directing our very first thoughts to God. Yet many of us, I fear, begin the day by doing almost everything else.

"Now and then I ask people," writes Vash Young, "what are their first thoughts on awakening. One man told me he was too stupid, when he first awoke, to think of anything. Another said he wondered where he had left his cigarettes. A third confessed that the weather always seemed bad to him—it was going to be too hot, or too cold, or too wet, or too dry, or too something. A fourth said it always struck him on awakening that his wife and children were deliberately trying to plague him. A salesman remarked that he awoke dreading the round of calls he must make. A stockbroker said he could not eat breakfast until he had looked at the financial page and learned the worst. If you feel as I do in the morning, answered still another, you would think you had won a great victory when you refrained from hitting somebody."

Is not this a fair review of our waking thoughts? Yet we wonder why the day frequently goes so hard. But what else can we expect, during the daily round, when we begin the day with such annoying and enervating thoughts? Yet all the while there is the great

energizing thought of God waiting for our waking minds to lay hold of it. You remember how beautifully Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote of her first thought of God in the morning:

Still, still with Thee when purple morning breaketh,  
When the bird waketh and the shadows flee,  
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,  
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

This, then, is the first step in making private prayer effective in our daily lives: immediately when you awaken in the morning set your first thoughts upon God, and think of him objectively, not subjectively. Then say to yourself with the writer of the 118th Psalm: "This is the day which the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it."

#### MEDITATION IN GOD'S PRESENCE

The second step in creating for yourself a day with God follows immediately. Sometime, in the early morning, devote yourself to a few minutes of quiet meditation in the presence of God. The best time, of course, for such a spiritual exercise is in the silence and solitude of your own room, before you come down to breakfast, after you are dressed and ready for work. I know that isn't always feasible. Each of us must adjust his own schedule in the matter. Perhaps the most suitable time for such a quiet period for mothers is after they have sent the children off to school. It may be that the best time for business men would be at their desks before they become immersed in the tasks awaiting attention. That might mean arriving at the office a few moments earlier each morning. One of the business men in my former parish took an earlier train to New York so that he could make of his desk an altar a half-hour before his office opened up.

But all this is a matter of detail which each one of us must work out for himself. Where and when you have a quiet time with God is not important, but it is of the highest importance that you do have such a quiet time before the morning has advanced too far.

But here again we are not going to deal in generalities; for I can already hear some of you ask: What are we to do during that quiet time? So let me suggest at once that you devote the first part of that quiet period, not to thinking about your difficulties and troubles before God, but to thinking about your blessings, your privileges, your opportunities. In other words, let the first part of your quiet period be given over to a prayer of thanksgiving, and not a general prayer of thanksgiving. As the old hymn advises: "Count your many blessings. Name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." Yes, and it will surprise you how such an exercise in thanksgiving will set you up for the day—how it will stimulate your strength and courage.

#### THANKSGIVING AND COURAGEOUS LIVING

An old man was asked to explain the secret of his serene enjoyment of life and his knack of spreading happiness. At first he demurred, but at length, seeing his friend's eagerness to know, he confessed to a cer-

tain rule kept from his youth up. He had devoted an hour before breakfast each day solely to thanksgiving. That hour of concentration on all that was glorious and beautiful and satisfying, he said, brought him so near to God that the glow of it lasted all day. It may be that some of us feel that we haven't many blessings, and yet concentrating before God on the few blessings we have will put us in a better mood to meet the day, regardless of how meager our material and physical resources may be. Thank God and take courage, for there is the closest connection between thanksgiving and courageous living.

Then, against that background of thanksgiving, in



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that spirit of gratitude, spend the remaining moments of your morning quiet period in thinking through your day with God. Put your problems before him as explicitly as you can. Seek God's guidance on these problems as intelligently as you can. Then go forth to your work with the assurance that God will go with you and guide you and see you through the day.

#### PIERCING THE DAY WITH THOUGHTS OF GOD

But we must hasten on to a consideration of the third step in this technique to bring God into the daily round. For want of a better expression let us put it this way: Pierce the day with repeated thoughts of God. Miss Lester suggests that we associate our thought of God with some periodic occurrence in the course of the day such as the striking of the hour by a near-by church clock. Thus we shall form the habit of directing our thoughts to God every time we hear those church bells. I recall one of our lieutenants telling me as we marched back from the front after the Armistice,

that his wife and little five-year-old daughter, all during the months he was away, would stop whatever they were doing as they heard the church clock on the corner strike the hour, and pray for their daddy at the front in France.

What a lovely thing to do for our friends and our dear ones—to remember them before God any time and anywhere! Do you not know what it means to pass a little child on the street and say quietly: God bless that boy? Do you not know what it means when you pass a hospital to utter a brief prayer for the sick and the suffering? Do you not know what it means to turn quickly to God as you set your hand to some difficult task and say: God help me and give me the strength to do this as I should? Do you not know what it means when you sit down to lunch, whether at home or in a restaurant or at the club, to think of the men and women and little children who are hungry, and to pray God to make you mindful of the needs of others? No less an authority on the spiritual life than Dean Inge says: "I attach deep significance to these short ejaculatory prayers." Literally, these javelin prayers by means of which we pierce the day with God.

You can do that, no matter where you are. You can do it as you walk along the city streets crowded with people. You can do it as you sit in your offices which look out over the lake, or which look out upon the spire of some church. You can even do it as you travel in a crowded streetcar or bus. I heard Ozora Davis say that among his most precious moments of communion with God were those on the Chicago Elevated as he went to and fro each day from his home to the old Chicago Theological Seminary buildings. Chester Firkins had similar experiences on a New York subway which inspired him to write these lines:

I, who have lost the stars, the sod,  
For chilling pave and cheerless light,  
Have made my meeting-place with God  
A new and nether night.

A figment in the crowded dark,  
Where men sit muted by the roar,  
I ride upon the whirring spark  
Beneath the city's floor.

You that 'neath country skies can pray,  
Scoff not at me—the city clod,  
My only respite of the day  
Is this wild ride with God.

#### FINDING PEACE AT THE DAY'S CLOSE

So we come to the fourth step in this simple technique for bringing God into the daily round. At the close of the day, just before you retire, sit quietly in a comfortable chair and relax in the presence of God. Let all the strain go from your body, and then look back over the day with God. If you have marred the day with an unkind word or deed, don't try to forget it. Bring it out before God and seek his forgiveness and yield to his spirit as it prompts you to seek forgiveness from those you have harmed. If someone has been unkind to you, do not go on cherishing that grievance. Bring it out before God, and let his love play upon it until it vanishes from your thought. If

the day has left you worn and weary and your mind is perplexed and troubled, bring it out before God until his presence imparts to you the peace you so much need. Perhaps these lovely lines of Whittier's will help you:

Drop thy still dews of quietness  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.

Then with your mind ordered by God and your conscience cleansed, make ready for bed.

Even as in the morning your first waking thoughts were turned to God, so let your last thoughts at night be of God. Let those last thoughts of God be restful, and reassuring, and trustful. Perhaps, as you feel sleep coming on, you might well repeat such words as these: "He giveth his beloved sleep," or "The darkness and the light are both alike unto Thee, O God, yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee and the night shineth as the day." Or this: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

You will recall that we said our waking thoughts of God in the morning are of strategic importance in enabling us to begin the day aright. But our last thoughts of God at night are of even greater importance than our waking thoughts in the morning. For our last thoughts at night will determine to a large degree what our first thoughts in the morning are likely to be. The secret of beginning the day with God tomorrow is to end the day with God tonight.

To end the day with God and to begin the day with God, and to pierce the day repeatedly with thoughts of God, is sure to bring the living God into the daily round and to give us days after days with God. Then we shall know for ourselves the blessed truth of our text: "The Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."

#### Vinco

(A reply to the "Invictus" of W. E. Henley)

OUT of the depths, from cleft to cleft  
Toiling upward, my couch a stone,  
I thank Thee, God, I am not left  
To face my soul's grim foes alone.

For damning fault and blacker guilt  
That flaunt the pathless wastes I strayed,  
I had no plea save that which built  
Its hope on mercy Love has made.

I yearn to part the curtained years,  
To reach my loved one in that Land,  
And through the turmoil of my tears  
To see life whole, and understand.

In other might I make my boast  
And, dauntless, press the distant goal:  
Great Victor of the conquering host,  
Thou art the Captain of my soul.

ELLIOT FIELD.

## 'Spiritual Stars'

BY R. PAUL CAUDILL

*That ye may become blameless and unmixed, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom ye shine as spiritual stars in the world, holding forth the word of life. Philippians 2:15,16a.*

**D**ARK days have come upon us. We are at war. The signs are on every hand. Thrice this day I have been reminded, in no uncertain terms, of this grim fact. One reminder came as I called at the home of a cultured mother whose husband had recently passed away. I wanted to convey a personal word of sympathy in her hour of bereavement. But I found her in an added sorrow. Her only son, a fine specimen of young manhood, was to leave in two days for his post in our armed forces, a post from which he may not return.

The son passed through the room and paused for a few words while I was there. I watched the mother as she looked upon him with just pride; and then as he went out, there was a hush followed by tears. She tried to brush them away and conceal her emotions, but she failed: a tear lodged on her pale cheek and sparkled like a dewdrop on its downward course until it fell at her feet on the floor. "I am so glad you came," she said, as I took my leave—and she wanted to say more, but dared not try for the present. I understood and, after a short prayer, left her in her solitude.

What shall be our word to the church as ministers of the gospel in such an hour as this?

For many of us who hate the thought of war and who prayed and hoped for better days, there are to be fiery furnaces of adjustment. Slowly, calmly, and with prayerful deliberation we shall take our positions under the duress of circumstance in the hope that we may hold our flocks together.

One thing—we shall not give voice to our doubts. Rather we shall proclaim with all the passion of our souls the great certainties of the divine Word—certainties that are for all time clothed with the radiant garments of the Absolute. There are many of them—these eternal thoughts of the divine Mind by which men are to live and die, in season and out of season, war or no war.

One of them is recorded in the words of the Apostle Paul as he challenges his beloved fellow Christians at Philippi to let their lives be of such noble character that, despite the wicked and depraved generation in whose midst they live, they will shine as spiritual stars.

### I—THE DARK WORLD

The picture that Paul paints of his generation is dark indeed. Said he to the Philippian Christians, "You are 'in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation.'" The metaphor is that of an individual whose body is distorted or twisted—maybe an eye, or a limb—out of the true posture or direction. The figure strangely reminds me of a tragic scene I looked upon some two years ago—the crushed and mangled form of an automobile that a few hours before had claimed the life of

a lad of fourteen summers. Look at it! The hood is lying crosswise—the engine all pushed up under the hood as if a mighty Vulcan had hit it with his hammer. The left side is warped and twisted as though it had been caught in the huge cogs of some giant machine and chewed to formless confusion. Look at the top, too, all crushed in; and inside, the upholstery helter-skelter. The right side bulges, too, with open doors as if the car were stuffed with swollen cargo. Broken glass . . . disordered whole! The only marvel is that the casualty was no greater.

The analogy may be somewhat crass, but it tells the story of the kind of world in which the early Christian lived and died. It was a world all but void of human liberty. Millions of slaves marched at the whims of a tyrant's vanity. It was a world accustomed to throes of war and the ruthless conquest of heartless dictators. Politically, offices were bought and sold as so much chattel, and the rank venality of the officeholding class is marked by the historians as one of the chief reasons for the disintegration and fall of the mighty empire. It was a time of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. Side by side the tumultuous crowds cried out for bread and amusement, while the official life of the nation sat down to sumptuous feasts of the tongues of nightingales. Infanticide was common. The hallowed beauty of the marriage relation was frequently invaded by the bold intrusion of the Roman mistress.

If for a moment we could forget the radio, the automobile, the steamship, the airplane and our streamlined cities, we would realize how very much our world resembles the "crooked and perverted" world of the Apostle Paul, and how relevant are his words today!

The political life of the nations of the world is twisted and warped into "formless confusion." International law has literally gone with the wind. We have witnessed the recrudescence of barbarism in its most brutal and tormenting form. Standards of decency and respect have in many instances been utterly abandoned as the victorious armies of aggressive nations have swept down like carnivorous wolves on the quiet folds of the little, peace-loving nations of the world. I have talked with missionaries who, with their own eyes, witnessed clouds of shame as black as Stygian night, settling down over peaceful cities in the name of a "new order."

Close by, at home, we behold throughout the cities of our land corruption and bribery of the most flagrant sort among the officeholding class. City administrations accepting handouts from the gambling racketeers of the underworld; open and flagrant violations of the liquor laws; the entry of candidates into elective public office without so much as a primary or a public election, merely because the powerful party clique of local politicians made it impossible for opposition to be manifested without the probability of drastic economic reprisals!

With Josiah Gilbert Holland, one is prone to cry out from every housetop in the land:

God give us men! A time like this demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready  
hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;  
 Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
 Men who possess opinions and a will;  
 Men who have honor; men who will not lie;  
 Men who can stand before a demagogue  
 And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;  
 Tall, sun-crowned men, who live above the fog  
 In public duty and in private thinking.

In the sphere of economic relations the picture is no brighter. We are living in an age that is characterized by one of the strangest paradoxes of history. We boast of our realm of plenty and yet we hear the wail of millions who go unfed. The weird cries of "overproduction" and "undernourishment" like Siamese twins parade our land. Strange though it may seem, wherever the sound of one is heard, the other stalks hard by.

Lingering starvation awaits millions of our fellow mortals, unless unforeseen relief comes at once. Just how bad conditions actually are in Sweden, Norway, Holland, France and Belgium, no one can fully surmise. In China the full truth may never be known—the truth about her vast night of suffering in the throes of economic disaster. I heard a responsible missionary, recently from China, say that there are great numbers of Chinese who for months have had nothing on which to live but one sweet potato a day. Others have not had that! The staggering multitudes, famished and weary from suffering, are crying out with Job: "Let the day perish wherein I was born . . . my face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death."

In the realm of race relations the clouds of hatred, suspicion and jealousy have all but obscured the day. The ancient ghetto with its attendant ills has come to life again for the Jew in vast areas of prostrate Europe, while millions boast of the mythical virtues of racial superiority. Here in America, the Sons of Thunder still carry on—ever ready to call down fire from heaven upon those of different racial stock and cultural heritage. Difficult indeed it is, even for those of us who are of the household of faith, to realize that we are "every one members one of another," and that One "is the Father of us all."

In whatever direction one turns in his survey of the world about him, he will find, even as the Apostle Paul found two thousand years ago, a generation that is "crooked and perverted," and nations that have all but forgotten God!

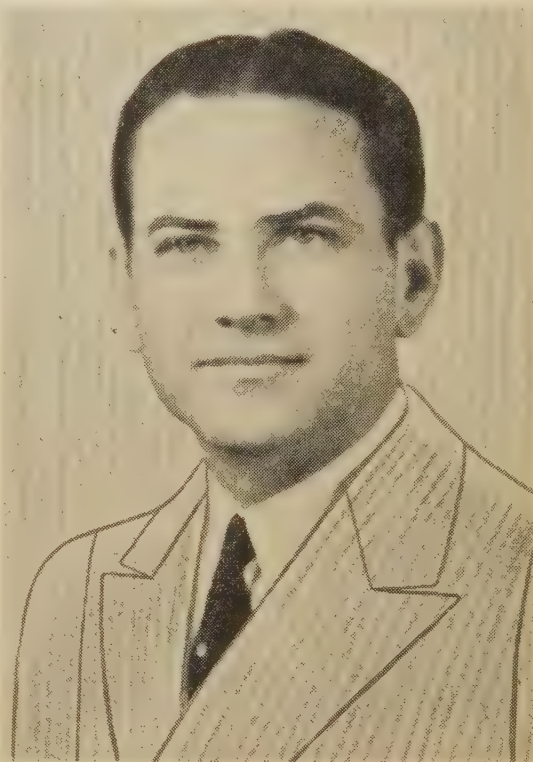
## II—THE NEEDED LIGHT

But the true Christian will find more than merely a dark world, submerged in the paradoxes of chaotic suffering and internecine strife. He will find a world that is crying out for light and hope and love—a world whose deepest yearnings utter forth a loud cry for deliverance.

And so it is at this point that the Apostle Paul flings his challenge at the feet of Christians. He enjoins them to live lives of such translucent character that they shall appear as spiritual luminaries in the shrouded skies of the moral and spiritual universe. He

is saying that the mission of the church and of believers is to shine as spiritual stars; not merely to appear as stars, but "to shine, shed light, as stars."

But this role of the spiritual luminary is not to be played by him who sits at some far-off point of vantage. "Among whom," "in the world," says the Apostle, "ye shine as spiritual stars." If we as Christians are to help dispel the shadows of our somber world, if we are to help restore the true posture of the perverted limbs of society, we must resolve to remain "in the world," a vital part of the world, and keenly aware of all its ills—of all its needs. There is no place for the "pillar-saint" in our day. Let the Stylites be gone!



R. PAUL CAUDILL

The heavy shades of darkness that have settled upon our world can be lifted only in proportion as real flesh-and-blood servants of the Lord Christ, clothed with power from on high, dare to live victoriously for him "in the world." Said Jesus, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them out of evil." The Apostle Paul realized the necessity for this personal ministry of the followers of Christ, no matter how dark, no matter how painful the path to be trod. "I am ready," said he, "not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Like the pond lily, we must resolve to fulfill our mission wherever we are, however unlovely the surroundings—though we be planted by the Hand that guides us in the stagnant pools of wretchedness and misery.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,  
 Were man but formed to feed  
 On joy, to solely seek and find and feast;  
 Such feasting ended, then

As sure an end to men;  
Then welcome each rebuff  
That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!

Again, we are reminded that we who would shine as spiritual stars are to develop a godly, Christlike character. As children of God we are to be "without blemish," "blameless and unmixed," says the Apostle. Like the lamb of the ancient sacrifice we are to be "without blemish!" Like some precious metal, we are to be "unmixed"—free from debasing alloys!

Never were words more pregnant with meaning than these with which Paul characterizes the foundation for this illuminating power. They strike at the heart of the world's deepest needs—these words that plead for moral character and integrity. Sooner or later Christians will realize this. Sooner or later Christians will come to see that unless they are constantly clothed with the shining garments of noble character their lives will not amount to so much as one jot or one tittle in this matter of extending Christ's Kingdom upon the earth. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Jesus; "ye are the light of the world." "But if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

#### 'HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE'

Once more, the Apostle Paul suggests that we who would serve as instruments for the spiritual illumination of the world must bear a positive, living testimony to the things of God. We are to be forever in the attitude of "holding forth the word of life."

This holding forth of the word of life is not to be accomplished without self-denial and crossbearing. How clearly this is set forth by the life of William Tyndale! Of the two editions of the New Testament by Tyndale, there have been preserved only three fragments. Still, around these fragments clusters a vivid romance of the disadvantage and trials under which he labored in his great work, and how on October 6, 1536, the devoted champion of the People's Bible was strangled

and burned at the stake in Vilvorde, his last words being the prayer: "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes."

It is said that on one occasion Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," was approached by a friend as she sat on the beach at sunset with an open Bible in her lap, and asked the question, "Why did you give up the stage when you were enjoying such wonderful triumphs?" To which she replied, pointing toward the mellow beauty of the golden sunset: "When every day it made me think less of that and [laying her hand on the open Bible as she said it] nothing at all of this, what else could I do?"

Whatever happens in the life of the follower of Christ, let him remember above all things that he is to be a witness of the way, the truth and the life; that he is to hold forth the word of life with all his mind and heart and strength. "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

And this is our skeleton in the closet. It is here that we find the head and front of our offending. I verily believe—and I have arrived at this position after much meditation—that if the followers of Christ who compose the churches of this and other lands had been the shining lights that they might have been under God during the past twenty-five years, this present world conflict could not have been! If Christians of the twentieth century had lived as heroically for Christ as Christians of the first century lived, then they would have made Christianity *work*—today.

It has not been all dark everywhere. It is not now. Here and there have been lights as bright as the stars of the firmament. Now and then there have been those who would say with David Livingstone: "I will place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the Kingdom of Christ. If anything I have will advance the interests of that Kingdom, it shall be given up or kept, as by keeping or giving it I shall most promote the glory of him to whom I owe all my hopes, both of time and eternity." There will be others to follow in the train.

## A Pastoral Prayer

3-8-42

BY ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

**O** GOD our Father, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we give thanks unto Thee for the gift of Thy son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who came that we might know Thee as Thou art and that we, through him, might come to Thee and be saved.

We pray for the insight of his mind; that we may not remain in the way of death and destruction but may recognize the things that belong unto peace.

We pray for the support of his faith; that we may not be overwhelmed by any disaster but may obtain grace to help us in time of need.

We pray for the goodness of his spirit; that we may not hurt one another but may be kind one to another, always.

O God, who didst give Thy son to be the Savior of the world and the Prince of Peace, overcome our darkness with his light, our fear with his faith, our bitterness and hatred with his love, our despair with his hope.

Comfort with Thy mercy and protect with Thy might all who are now caught in the horror of war, and hasten the time when there shall be peace in the hearts of men and in all the earth.

We praise and bless Thee for the homes in which Thou hast set us, and we pray to Thee for those whom we love; that they, wherever they may be, may have the support and comfort of Thy presence. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# PREACHER PROBLEMS of PULPIT, PEW and PARISH

## Do Sermons Grow?

By CHARLES W. GILKEY

AS I write these words, we are all just taking down the Christmas trees that throughout this holiday season have brightened our homes and our hearts in a dark time. Christmas Eve, when together we carried in and set up the tree, connected its circuits of colored lights, hung its bright baubles and tinsel, and piled our presents around its base, was this year as always a high point in family experience. But presently, one after another, those colored lights burned out, and then the whole circuit each time went dark; the green pine needles began to litter the floor by the hundred; the tree itself came daily to look more artificial and forlorn. Shortly after New Year's Day, by common consent, we took off the decorations to use again next year, carried the tree out, swept up the litter, and threw away or burned up both litter and tree together. It had served its temporary purpose—but too much of its beauty was “put on”; too little grew from within—and what growth there had earlier been was completely cut off from roots and soil, and lost all permanence thereby.

### ● *Saturday Night Sermons*

We preachers are tempted every week by the plausible techniques and short-time perspectives of the Christmas tree. It is always possible, late in the week or even on Saturday evening, to carry into our preoccupied minds a last-resort text or idea, brighten it up with well distributed illustrations and high-colored stories out of some well worn stock of homiletic decoration, surround it with contemporary and local applications—and then depend upon carefully calculated liturgical lights and shadows to produce the desired effects. We have all heard sermons as striking, as timely, as effectively spotlighted as any Christmas tree. Now and then—preferably not too many times a year—every man of us has to avail himself of these last-moment techniques. Every parish minister knows how the inexorable exigencies of life and death can invade and disarrange the most careful homiletic habits and schedules. Both of our children were born between midnight and daylight on Sunday morning, and their father preached as usual a few hours thereafter. It is certainly better in such crises, pastoral or domestic, to rig up a Christmas tree at the last moment than to have no tree at all. But it is also well for the preacher to remember—and see to it—that Christmas comes but once a year!

The main point of this article is that every tree which (unlike all Christmas trees) “bringeth forth his fruit in his season,” has deeper roots, renders more varied and enduring services to the world and to mankind, and requires longer and less high-pressure schedules to complete its growth, than any Christmas tree. Vital and creative sermons and services of worship, like vital and creative religion itself—“the life of God in the soul of man”—have about them something of that slow-maturing but spontaneous quality to which Joyce Kilmer directed our

nity—not only when they are first planted, but long after the preacher himself is gone.

### ● *Seeds, Soil and Sunshine*

The minister's own responsibility then is to discover and to cultivate the seeds, the soil and the sunshine that will contribute most toward making sermons grow. Most of us pick up seed-thoughts and germinal ideas for sermons in all sorts of places and times: the books we read, the neighbors we talk with, the items we note in the papers, the life situations and problems we discover as pastors, the saints and sinners we know both past and present, and especially the winged words of the Bible, from which last so many of our most fertile seeds come. We learned long since to jot down these seed-thoughts in a notebook: some of us because otherwise they slipped away through our sieve-like memories and were speedily lost; some of us because we discovered from reading Phillips Brooks' life in our own formative years, how large a part his notebooks played in his development into maturity as a preacher.

But then some of us made a fresh discovery of our own. A considerable proportion of these seed-thoughts that we put down in our notebooks never sprouted and took root in our own thinking and conviction. Year after year we go over them, but they remain as lifeless as the ink and paper with which they were written. Some few of them, however, germinate and grow in our own minds and hearts—we know not why or how. From some of these that take months or even years to develop, grow some of the sermons that seem to help people most: long years afterward we discover that some hearer has found in them “a shelter in a time of storm.” Our notebook, in other words, has beyond our foreseeing become a kind of nursery, in which through months and years the seed-thoughts that are fertile separate themselves from those that are not. It takes time to make that important test, and patience: for some of these seedlings do not even show above ground for a year or two; they seem to be waiting for the next summer's sunshine, or even for the winter's snow. But so at any rate sermons do grow.

### ● *Transplanting from Notebooks into Life*

Few trees, however, develop to full maturity even in the best of nurseries. They are too thickly set together



CHARLES W. GILKEY

attention in the last couplet of his best known poem:

“Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.”

This quality is common to vital religion, good sermons and living trees, in that the former, like the latter, render such varied services and minister to so many different human needs. Trees contribute variety and beauty to the landscape, blossoms to the spring, shade to the hot summer, fruit to the autumn, and then in winter, as Maltbie D. Babcock's “Trees in Winter” opened the eyes of many of us to see—“strength, grace, symmetry of life.” So good preaching, like good religion, supplies various human needs at different times—and by no means all of them at once. The sermons of a parish minister may seem at first sight as unessential and as much alike as the individual trees in a forest: but if they and the preacher are both alive and growing, they will survive storm and drought, and will contribute something to the spiritual landscape and climate of the commu-

there, and have neither soil nor sunshine enough. The young tree gets its chance when it is transplanted to its own location in a soil and climate suited to its characteristics, there to take deeper root and spread its branches toward the sun. So the growing sermon has to be transplanted from a notebook to the life of a community, the needs of individuals, the experience, reflection, and conviction of the preacher himself. But even then it does not often mature overnight. The sooner the minister, early some morning in his study when his mind is fresh and creative, can outline his developing thought from trunk to branch to twig, the more chance he will have to prune it back into more concentrated vitality. The more clearly and carefully he writes out just what he wants to say (whether he later takes that written manuscript into his pulpit or not), the more patiently he can search for what George Buttrick calls "the inevitable word." This also takes time, and cannot be forced. If, as reported, one of the greatest of living preachers spends an hour in preparation for every minute that he preaches, we lesser varieties can hardly expect too many short cuts to fruitfulness. So through painstaking preparation, on different days and in different moods, according to the method which each man develops as most fruitful for himself, sermons do grow.

● **Logical Use of Illustrations**

This is particularly true of the selection and arrangement of illustrations. An American preacher famous for his effectiveness at this very important point in any sermon, tells us that early in his preparation he jots down all the illustrations of its main ideas that he can think of, from as many areas of human interest and experience as possible, until he has a list of from a dozen to a score. From this longer list he then gradually selects five or eight of the most accurate and effective illustrations for his purpose as it clarifies, and gradually locates the point in the developing sermon where each of these will best serve to reawaken interest and reinforce the argument and appeal. Most of us illustrate our sermons as we decorate our Christmas trees, by baubles and bright lights strung on at the moment from the outside. Phillips Brooks' notebooks plainly show how many of his best illustrations grew out of some analogy noted months or even years before, that was grafted long afterward into some growing sermon. Not all illustrations develop that way, of course; but many of the best of them do thus grow in relevance and fruitfulness.

● **The Mystery of Preaching**

There is one last and highest regard

in which the best sermons grow. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Two of the great preachers of our generation, years apart, have said in conversation practically the same thing: that preaching remains to them still a mystery, the secret of which they have never fully mastered. Most of the rest of us have often had the experience they both went on to describe: some sermon of which we were proudest, bright and colorful and timely as a Christmas tree, suddenly went dark on us in its delivery—or was carried out and discarded by the congregation soon thereafter! Sometimes we too have shared also their other experience: the sermon we thought a failure when we preached it, proved to carry fertile seeds somewhere beneath its husks and shells—and years afterwards we found these seeds growing, like Longfellow's song, "in the heart of a friend."

● **God Gives the Increase**

This mysterious life-giving quality in preaching, which the best of preachers by themselves cannot calculate or achieve, but can only receive humbly and share, is given us all from beyond ourselves—as Beethoven said of his greatest music, and Brooks of his best sermons. "And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." In that respect, as in so many others, good preaching is like religion itself. It calls for all that men can bring to it, of training and thought, of discipline and preparation, of personal experience and self-dedication. But even then its quickening power is called forth within us by God's sunshine and rain that come from beyond ourselves, falling upon soil that has been deepened by our labors, enriched by our failures, and sometimes watered by our tears. "God gave the increase" . . . "some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." So by the grace of God sermons do grow—even in soil that looked overworked and none too promising.

**Benjamin Franklin on Preachers**

THE church of Christ was not made for the preachers, but the preachers of Christ were made for the world and the church. The church of Christ does not belong to the preachers of Christ—it is not their property; but they belong to the church—are its property. The church is not the servant of the preachers, but preachers of Christ are servants of the church. The church of Christ is not called and sent by preachers, but preachers are called and sent by the church. Preach-

ers in the Kingdom of Christ are no more dignitaries, kings and priests than any other members. They are the Lord's instruments, put forth through the church to do his work, and mighty instruments, too, while the Lord is with them; but the poorest, most useless and miserable creatures on this earth when forsaken of God. Or, in other words, when they are doing the Lord's work, with an eye single to his glory, they are noble instruments for good among men; but when they become selfish, engage simply in their own work, or that which they can turn to their own personal aggrandizement, their usefulness ceases, and they are dead weights upon the cause.

Our Lord's own life is the model of perfection in human character, both public and private. No community need look for any permanent good from any preacher who does not imitate the character of his Lord and Master. He may be much of a gentleman, very fine, pleasant, and interesting to worldly-minded persons, and not do anything or say anything that would remind one of the Savior of the world. But to come under the name of a preacher of Christ, a disciple of Christ, and not be like him, not make men think of him, love him and desire to come to him, is a deception upon the church and the world.

**More Quotable Poems**

So popular has been *1000 Quotable Poems*, published 13 years ago, that Thomas Curtis Clark, its compiler, has now issued a companion volume entitled

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WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

REV. CHARLES W. KEGLEY received his B.A. and M.A. degrees at Northwestern University, his B.D. at Chicago Lutheran Seminary; he is a candidate for a Ph.D. degree at Northwestern (August 1942). Since September 1940 he has been pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Evanston, Ill. He is pastor for Lutheran students in Chicagoland and organized the Metropolitan Lutheran Student Council of Chicagoland, and is a member of the Interchurch Council, University of Chicago. Mr. Kegley was a leader of the World Conference of Christian Youth at Amsterdam and conducted a Lutheran student tour of central Europe and the British Isles in the summer of 1939.

For many years Rev. CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY has been minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. A former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., Dr. Macartney is widely known as a leader of the evangelical forces of that denomination. He has written many books.

Since 1930 Rev. ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS has ministered at Broadway Tabernacle (Congregational) in New York city. Earlier pastorates were in West Springfield, Mass., New Haven, Conn., and Buffalo, N. Y. Graduating from Johns Hopkins, Mr. Chalmers served in France in the First World War, and was there awarded two medals. His war experience turned him from his ambition to be a college professor to the ministry. He graduated from Yale Divinity School in 1922. Mr. Chalmers was instrumental in organizing the New York Ministers' Peace Group and was chairman of their meeting in Broadway Tabernacle, in 1938, where over 200 ministers and rabbis pledged themselves to a "Covenant of Peace" in which the vow was registered: "I renounce

war and never will support another." This peace group was later greatly enlarged and last December, after U. S. entry into the war, Mr. Chalmers announced that, so far as he knew, not one of the 2,200 signers of the Covenant of Peace had changed his views.

This month Rev. GENE E. BARTLETT succeeds Rev. BRADFORD S. ABERNETHY at the First Baptist Church, Columbia, Mo., which maintains a Student Center for students of the University of Missouri, Stephens College for Women and Christian College. Mr. Bartlett goes to Columbia from Calvary Baptist Church, Syracuse, N. Y., where he has ministered since 1937. He is a graduate of Denison University and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School.

Following a pastorate at West Side Presbyterian Church, Ridgewood, N. J., Rev. ALBERT G. BUTZER went to Westminster Church, Buffalo, where he now ministers. After receiving his A.B. at Northwestern College, Naperville, Ill., he studied for two years at the Evangelical Seminary there. Union Seminary awarded him a B.D. degree. He delivered the Schaefer Lectures at Yale in 1938. The sermon in this issue was preached at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club.

A graduate of Wake Forest College and Southern Baptist Seminary, Rev. R. PAUL CAUDILL went to First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga., from First Baptist, Carrollton, Ky. Mr. Caudill's father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all Baptist ministers.

Rev. ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE is minister of the First Methodist Church, Evanston, Ill.

Dr. CHARLES W. GILKEY is dean of the chapel at the University of Chicago.

TITLES AND TEXTS What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

WILLIAM B. MATHEWS, Boulevard Congregational, Detroit, Mich. "The Triumph of the Defeated." John 16:33—"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."  
JAMES A. RICHARDS, First Church in Oberlin, Oberlin, O. "The Church and the War." Rom. 12:14—"Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not."  
WILLIAM HIRAM FOULKES, Old First Church, Newark, N. J. (Pastor Emeritus). "The Great Reconciliation."

Psa. 85:10—"Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." II Cor. 5:19—"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."  
W. ALFRED WYCOFF, Pilgrim Congregational, Vineland, N. J. "You Can Have Certainty." John 6:63—"The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life."  
BIRGER DAHL, Methodist, Mendota, Ill. "Priorities for the New Earth." Luke 4:18—"... to preach the gospel to the poor, ... to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."  
JOHN VAN EMAN BERGER, First Presbyterian, Portage, Wis. "How May We Be Sure in Religion?" I John 2:3, 5; 3:19—"This is how we may be sure we know him, by obeying his commands. ... This is how we may be sure we are in him ... live as he lived. ... Thus it is that we may be sure. ... whenever our hearts condemn us." (Moffatt)  
R. EDWARD DOWDY, Enon Baptist, Hollins, Va. "Priority Without Shortage." Matt. 6:33—"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

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Title of sermon

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Text used (write out the text)

.....

Name of minister

.....

Name of church

.....

Address

# THE EDITOR'S PAGE

## The Event of the Month

**BEGIN** to have hope that the vital Christian function of religious education is going to be revived. My hope rests upon the spirit that characterized the annual convention of the International Council of Religious Education which drew 1,800 delegates to Chicago in mid-February. Many of us have been for a long time in an unhappy state of mind about the inadequacy of our church school gesture at Christian education, and particularly about the kind of teaching which has come into vogue in the name of modern pedagogy. In my opinion, our experts have taken us off the main track. Even were their program successful, which it is not, it would not do the thing for which the church is responsible, namely, transmitting the Christian gospel to each succeeding generation of its children and youth. Against all the experts, and inviting their ridicule, I would apply this test to the church's educational activity: Does it make intelligent, devout and loyal lovers of the church of Christ? If it doesn't, there is something radically wrong with it. Our modern standards and methods do not qualify under this test. Of course, in this matter the church is in a practical predicament. Even if it had a sound pedagogy, what could it do in the tiny corner of one hour a week, while the public school has the pupil five days of the week? The only way out of this predicament is to break the taboo against religious instruction in the public school. The Chicago convention faced all three of these questions—curriculum, expansion of instruction period (released time, vacation Bible school, etc.) and public education—as well as many other questions, in a spirit that showed a healthy discontent and a determination to arrive at an adequate system of religious instruction.

## The Book of the Month

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. By Nels F. S. Ferré. Harper & Brothers. \$2.00.

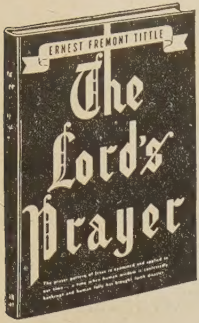
**A**MONG our younger theologians, I predict that Dr. Ferré has before him a productive and brilliant future. His first book, entitled *The Christian Fellowship*, met with a fine response. The present volume, his second, deals with the *ideas* by which the Christian fellowship lives. These ideas, or doctrines, of Christianity, he maintains, invest the Christian faith with finality as compared with every other religion or any other system of ideas. He is not ashamed to call himself a Christian—in the sense of adhering to the structural concepts which have emerged in Christian history and tradition. He affirms that this Christianity of ours is *true*! That is a wholesome affirmation in these times when too many of our intellectual leaders are trying to distill something from historical Christianity which they call its *essence*, and offering it to us

as if it were Christianity itself. I find myself in substantial agreement with this book. There is a little fly in the ointment, however, at the point where the author seems to use my book, *What Is Christianity?*, as a foil for his own thesis. His characterization of my book as a "dangerous doctrine" is based upon a very careless reading of it. I do not say that Christianity cannot be "described" in terms of its ideas; but that it cannot be *defined* in terms of its ideas; it can be *defined* only in terms of the historical community which God called into existence in history, the community in which its characteristic ideas could arise and did historically arise. I could point him to a score of places where my book stresses the very thesis which Dr. Ferré so ably expounds.

## A Thought for the Month

**H**ERE is the great task of Christianity in the modern world: to Christianize the state! Nothing else on the church's agenda compares with it in importance. The modern state has got out of hand in respect to its amenability to moral, not to mention Christian, standards. The modern state knows no law save the law of its own interest. We have an excellent illustration of this in the reluctance which the Federal Council of Churches has encountered in its attempt to secure congressional adoption of the simple declaration that the United States will consult—merely consult—with other nations likely to be affected by a proposed piece of legislation before enacting it. Ever since the state emerged from the control of the medieval church it has been developing in the line of the principles of statecraft enunciated by Machiavelli, who taught that moral ideals should be made to serve the state rather than the state to serve moral ideals. All our modern national states have been developed on this principle. Religion and morality are to be utilized to build up the state and to invest it with glory and power. Nationalism has thus become the real religion of the West. It is Christianity's supreme rival. And the bitter fruit of nationalism is inevitable war. We cannot go back to the medieval control of the state by the church, for when the church gets *control* of politics it inevitably becomes a political imperialism itself. In America we have a free church living *side by side* with a free state, in a free society. Both are independent—church, no less than state. The pre-eminent business of the church in such a free society is to Christianize the state. Not until the church comes out from its subserviency to the state, boldly affirms its complete independence and confronts the state with the righteous will of God, can we hope for a just and durable peace.

Charles Clayton Krumm



## The Lord's Prayer • by ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

The prayer pattern of Jesus re-examined and applied to our times—"a time when human wisdom is confessedly bankrupt and human folly has brought forth disaster."

The Purpose of This Book is to stimulate effortful prayer—that the name of God may be hallowed in a world where the true nature of God is still largely unrecognized—that the kingdom of God may come in a world that appears to be ruled by pride, greed, cunning, and military force—that daily bread may be provided for all in a world where millions of human beings now go hungry, although there is bread enough and to spare—that men who are sorely tried and tempted may obtain deliverance from evil at a time when demonic forces are sweeping over the earth—that men may confidently cry out: "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

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## How Jesus Dealt With Men • RAYMOND CALKINS

Clearly Dr. Calkins analyzes Jesus' contacts with men and women during his earthly ministry and then shows how his methods are applicable to this modern day of ours. The volume is alive with timely hints and helpful suggestions for all who wish to serve their fellows. In the author's vivid interpretations rich sermon values spring forth. The methods of Jesus are studied in detail. Two thousand years have failed to lessen their effectiveness.

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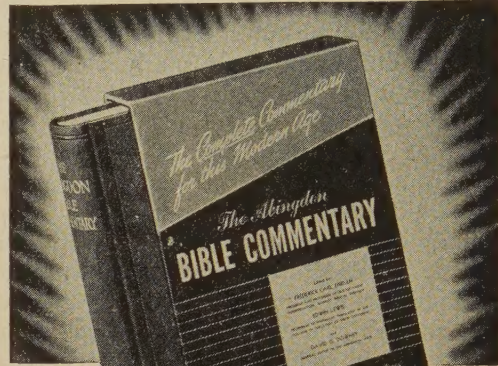
## There Are Sermons In Stories WILLIAM L. STIDGER

The stories included in this collection have grown out of human living. They tell of heroic and sacrificial actions which have lifted the lives of simple, humble people to a little higher plane, as well as incidents from the lives of the great and near-great. They are brief and streamlined, in keeping with the modern trend of the "short, short talk" and the "short, short story." A mine of "sermon hearts" and illustrations. \$2

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